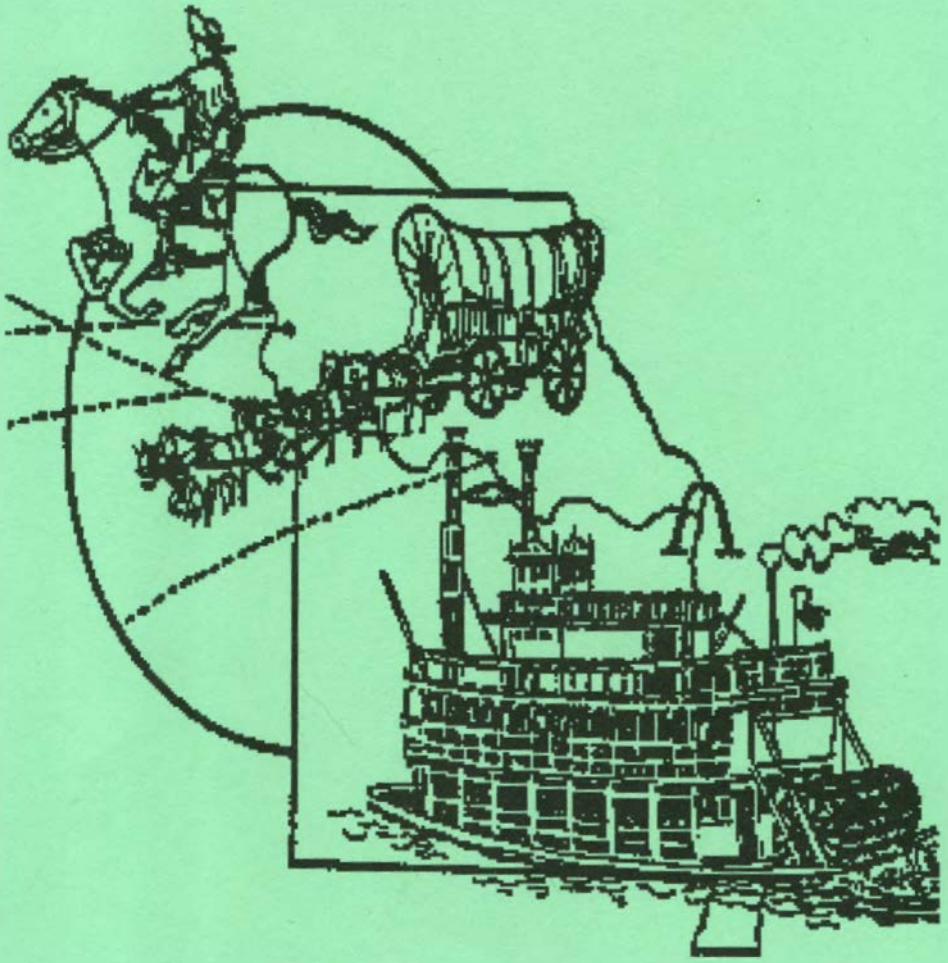

Toward The Setting Sun

2nd Series, Vol. 15 No. 1 Fall 2017

TOWARD THE SETTING SUN

The Historical Journal of the Missouri Conference
The United Methodist Church

Volume 15, Number 1 *Fall 2017*

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FROM THE ARCHIVES

In the absence of an editor, items of note have been pulled from the Missouri United Methodist Archives collection at Central Methodist University. The first offering is an address published in the Annual Conference Journal for the St. Louis Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church for 1888. E.G. Evans made this Memorial Address before a joint Lay-Clergy Session during the Conference.

Ellis G. Evans was a prominent lay leader from Cuba, Missouri. He was the great-grandson of Sarah Barton Murphy who established the famous Murphy Settlement. Ellis was a newspaper editor who also served as a state senator, aide to Governor Fletcher and postmaster. In 1872, he presided over the first Laymen's Electoral Conference of the St. Louis Conference, MEC. He was invited to present this Memorial Address and the full text was published in the printed journal. It is quite evident that this was a Northern Methodist speaking.

The second offering is a letter sent from Edwin Robinson to David Ross in 1864, that we originally published in the Spring 2007 issue of *Toward the Setting Sun.*

John Finley

Missouri Conference Archivist

MEMORIAL ADDRESS

On the Deceased Laymen of the St. Louis Conference,

HON. E. G. EVANS, OF CUBA, MISSOURI.

I appreciate the great honor of being called upon by your committee to speak of the departed Laymen of our Conference. I also feel the magnitude of the subject, and my incapacity to do justice to the grand theme. Yet I propose to respond by grasping and condensing material the best I can.

The laity of a church is supposed to be composed of souls redeemed. Hence they form the church, benefit society, and are therefore good citizens, if loyal to the civil government under which they live. When departed, they ought to have a place in history and in memory. The grave is silent; but while we view it, the acts of the departed crowd upon our memory, and we find that the results of the labor of an industrious Christian are not buried with him. The Psalmist said: "The righteous shall he in everlasting remembrance."

It is always understood that the itinerant minister soon finds the new settlements; but let him be ever so early on the ground, he generally finds the laymen there ready to greet him, take care of him and his horse, and to encourage him in his mission of grace. The average layman of any church is hospitable and his influence among his neighbors is good; but I do not claim that he is a saint. He is subject to the worry of privations and misfortunes. His journey is a perilous one, and is beset by the usual snares set for the feet of the believer. Considering these things, and the fact that each man carries elements of destruction in his own bosom, it seems to require much repenting and much forgiving to save a soul.

On a grave stone of a deceased Methodist, at Farmington, St. Francois County, are the words "Organized and taught the first Sunday School west of the Mississippi river." It ought not to surprise any of you to be told that this person was a woman. In all times, woman has been foremost in all good works. Hence, it is proper that I first mention Mrs. Sarah Barton Murphy, aunt of David Barton, one of Missouri's first United States Senators. In 1799, Reverend William Murphy, a Baptist minister, came to the locality mentioned, and bought land of the Spanish government with the intention

of removing to it from the far eastern part of Tennessee. He soon afterwards died, which caused his family to delay the move. After settling up the business of the estate, his widow, in the spring of 1802, purchased a keel-boat, in which she and the younger part of the family came—first down the Holston river, thence taking the great circle of the Tennessee river through Alabama, again through Tennessee, and across Kentucky; traveling more than one thousand miles before reaching the Ohio. Next, this little immigrant boat, commanded by a woman, descended the Ohio river and then came up the Mississippi river to Ste. Genevieve. There the boat was left and the remaining thirty miles was traveled in French carts. They arrived in "Murphy Settlement" on the 12th day of June, 1802. Within a year thereafter, many settlers came to that little community. To my friend, Samuel S. Boyce, of Farmington, I am indebted for many of the historical facts that I am giving of that locality. The settlement was Protestant, and the inhabitants keenly felt the loss of the religious privileges they had enjoyed in the States; but Mrs. Murphy frequently gathered neighbors at her house and held prayer meetings, and she also organized and kept up a Sunday School. When differences arose among the people, they were generally referred to this little woman, and her decisions were accepted as final. After the country passed to the control of the United States in 1808, and as soon as the fact was known by the settlers, they all met at the house of Mrs. Murphy for the purpose of giving vent to their political and religious enthusiasm. To Mrs. Murphy they conceded the honor of offering up the first Protestant prayer in public west of the Mississippi river. The Methodist itinerant was the first preacher to come, and although a majority of the people there at the time were Baptists, it was decided to organize a Methodist church as advised by Mrs. Murphy, she being regarded with the greatest affection for her piety, practical sense and sound judgment, she died in 1817.

In 1815 the Georges and McFarlands arrived in this Methodist settlement. Thomas George was a very enthusiastic shouting Christian and Methodist, originally from Virginia to North Carolina, thence to Missouri. He purchased a farm adjoining Mrs. Murphy's, and his two Methodist daughters married two Methodist grandsons of said Mrs. Murphy. Rhoda married Wm, Murphy and Mahala married William Evans. The other Georges went to the "Boon's Lick Country," now Howard and Cooper counties. Thomas died March 11th, 1840.

About this time there was a Methodist organization near Jackson, in Cape Girardeau County, the leading members of which were the Williams families. In 1849 they built the old McKendree Church, which is said to be the first Protestant church building erected in the State. It was in 1818 that Bishop McKendree traveled through that part of Missouri.

In about 1820 the first Belleview Camp meeting was held. It was a Methodist institution and was held annually for about twenty years. Belleview is a fertile region in the southwestern part of Washington County. Families came to those grounds and camped for a week at a time from a distance as far as twenty miles. Hence the Methodist people were personally acquainted who lived forty miles apart. At first there was also a fortification in the same neighborhood, where the families of the entire settlement were placed for safety in times of Indian raids, and when the men were out to drive back the savages.

Among the Methodists who patronized those Camp meetings, I remember George Wallis, Hon. John S. Brickey and the Edgars, from Potosi; Hon. James H. Relf, Dr. Robert Bruffee, "Billy" Woods and the Goodycoontz brothers of Belleview; Rob't Hughes and his son Zack Hughes, of Concord; Thomas George and William. Evans of St. Francois County; the Springers of Washington County, and the Harrisons, Johnsons and Adkinsons, of Crawford County.

Other prominent Methodists of south Missouri, whom I will mention, were G. W. Davis of Cape Girardeau, Eliazer Clay, David .Murphy and his son William and Henry Poston, of St. Francois County; James S. Evans of Caledonia, Hon. Benjamin Harrison, Judge Jonathan Clinton and John Poor, of Crawford County; James E. Callahan, Hon. David Henderson and John Sample, of Dent County; James Bradford, Dickerson Crow and the Wade brothers, of Texas County; Lyman Chapman, ,Wilson McEwin and Austin Clark, Sr., of Franklin County, and John Copeland of Maries County. Some of these lived to bear part of the pro-slavery persecutions of our church that began in 1845; but I believe all are of the departed of whom we are required to speak.

Cape Girardeau Circuit was organized in Missouri in 1809 and was traveled by Jesse Walker. Some of his successors were John Scripps, A. McAllister, Joseph Edmundson, Andrew Lopp, Jesse Green and L. Waugh. The house of William Evans, of Big River Mills, was a home and headquarters for these early preachers. William. Evans was son-in-law of Thomas George and grandchild of Sarah B. Murphy, who brought him up from infancy, his mother having died. He made the grand round with her in the keel boat when he was nine years of age. As another proof [of] the good influence of that woman, William never drank intoxicating liquors or used tobacco, and two of his sons imitated him in these particulars. William Evans died July 31, 1851.

The most noted and most exciting epoch in the history of the M.E. church, in South Missouri, was from 1845 to 1860. This was during the prime of my life, and, living on disputed ground, I learned much of the history of secession and rebellion.

In 1844 some of the ministers began to advocate a division of the church because of the anti-Slavery sentiments contained in the discipline. The laymen were universally opposed to the scheme of division. Many owned slaves; but I never saw a layman in favor of organizing a Southern church, until after the deed was done. They were much attached to our church principles, as recorded in the discipline, and were independent enough to be controlled by their ideas of right, and were not like some candidates for place, subject to being swayed by an anxiety to accommodate all opinions and classes of people.

The first change made by the new organization was striking out of the General Rules the clause prohibiting "buying or selling spirituous liquors," which action was generally condemned by Missouri Methodists. They were as much opposed to "buying or selling spirituous liquors," as they were against the "buying and selling of men, women and children," which clause was not stricken out until some years afterward. These changes, compromising with the two great evils, slavery and the liquor business, proved that our laymen were right.

Slavery having been abolished, it cannot now benefit any church, and all churches now unite against the liquor business. We can now treat the past agitation as a mistake, welcome the return of those who see it, and rejoice together that there is no

more whisky or slavery in the Church. But the deceased, for whom we speak today, are not here to rejoice with us. For their piety and patriotism they were made to feel the cheerless blasts of the slavery power. They learned to wish that there was no vassalage in this lovely country, and left us before the glad time came. In the early history of this state slavery was not so intolerant; but about the time I passed from youth to manhood I found myself confronted by the first geographical secession ever known to the history of this republic. Suddenly slavery became insolent and undertook to slay our church—to demolish the home of my youth. It is not reasonable to expect the young man to patiently see the savage foe enter his parents' enclosure to erect upon his green play-grounds a relic of barbarism modeled after a southern slave pen, and patiently see the walls of the grand old mansion torn down, or probably spattered with human blood, and not put in a protest. We had to resist the tyrant or run away from our much beloved native Missouri.

If those from free states, who are in Missouri, could only appreciate the sinfulness and the tyranny of the slave spirit, as Missourians had to do, there would be a better state of affairs today. Our church here was not interrupted by violence until a church was organized upon the agitation of slavery, and then it was some years before politicians got down to an unjust oppression. To the average laymen it seemed inconsistent for men who had voluntarily remained in the church up to 1845, to suddenly enter upon a career of persecution of those who remained where they had been, and to them it seemed strange that those who were contented with their old church would he called "malcontents." The action was open to the suspicion that the new organization desired to be the church of the land. Indeed, some did contend that by some kind of a dicker we were turned out of the church we had joined, or that our church had snuffed herself out, and sold us to a church of later organization, and with principles differing from those we entertained. The poor laymen were again puzzled to see those who abused our church contend that theirs was the same church, and that we rightfully belonged to their church. At one time we we're bad enough to be mobbed and yet always acceptable in their church without trial. How forgetful of the American character, and of the nature of a society, those who believed a society could be divided geographically and upon principles or opinions at the same time. How ridiculous the

idea that a man's opinions and conscience could change as he crossed the surveyor's lines.

It was found easier, however, to make plans and promises of trade, than it was to deliver the goods. Independent American citizens did not propose to belong to a society that they did not voluntarily join.

I was a member of the old Fourth Street Church, St. Louis, at the time an attempt was made to transfer laymen without their consent. On the night of July 24,1845, at a meeting of the members in said Church, it was resolved that they would not go into the Church South. On the following Tuesday night Rev. Joseph Boyle made a speech, in which he urged members to go into the new organization, and there was the first place that I ever heard promulgated the grand idea that it was necessary for God to compromise a little with slaveholders to get His gospel to their slaves. At the close of his speech he announced that a vote would be taken on the following night. I attended this election, and it was the first unfair one I ever saw. The preacher who assumed to be chairman was of the new church. He appointed the officers without taking a vote of the meeting. He then announced that the roll of members would be slowly read, and those present would answer to their names by saying the word "South" or the word "North" --according to whether they desired to go north or south. No opportunity was given those to vote who desired to remain in the M. E. Church, and so only one side voted. I was among those who did not vote. Two leading laymen of our Church there, who were active in opposition to leaving the M. E. Church, were brothers George Bushey and Hare. Rev. Joseph Tabor, a local Elder, also took an active part in defense of the liberty of laymen to remain in the Church they joined.

I will give one sample of how the question of division was settled in the country--the Steelville Circuit, which then covered territory where I now reside. When a southern preacher was sent there the official members would not recognize him as their minister. He then announced that he would take the vote at his appointments as he traveled around the circuit. Dr. David Henderson, a layman of the same circuit, traveled with him to represent the side of the M. E. Church. The vote resulted in a majority against the Church South, and the report was accordingly made to the Southern

Conference, which body disregarded it because it was an inland circuit, there being a circuit between it and the Mississippi River.

Power gained by opposition always provokes oppression, and in this case it was a continued conflict between the members of these two organizations for fifteen years, or more. As our Church was weakened it became the subject of attack from the slavery power. The members and ministers suffered more than can ever be known by those who have had no experience. It is easy to understand the published accounts of violence — such as breaking up meetings, riding members on rails, shooting them, or murdering them in some other way; but the thousands of jeers heard, and poisonous breath drawn from pro-slaveryism, cannot be described. We used to know it by the name of "slave spirit." There is nothing like it, and although there is no more authorized slavery in this country, that spirit still lives in Missouri.

Some compare the evils of the liquor power with the "slave spirit." the liquor business is a greater evil than slavery was; but nobody advocates it except paid attorneys, while slavery had its able defenders and powerful mobs.

Many of our people who desired to live in Missouri concluded not to endure the threatening storm, and left. Many good ministers came to help our little company, and, after making good resistance for a while, withdrew from the battlefield. But there were a few brave disciples of God, who stood their ground gloriously. Some died on the field, and others are yet living witnesses of what it was to be a preacher in the M. E. Church in Missouri from 1845 to 1861. By very adroit practices the enemy succeeded in getting up meetings in a few localities to adopt resolutions notifying our preachers that they would not be tolerated in Missouri; but it was not until 1855 that the oppression against our Church enlisted the law-makers. Our members and other friends of education established a seminary at Jackson, under the patronage of the Missouri Conference. Many of us contributed to the repair of the buildings, and to starting the school; but the charter was rejected by a vote of 60 to 36. The same kind of persecution was enacted by the Missouri Legislature two years thereafter in the case of the proposed Jefferson City University. Thus the money contributed to the Church for educational purposes was destroyed by these law-makers. As a native Missouri sufferer I protest against forgetting these wrongs as long as the perpetrators are boasting of the act and being

put in places of trust. Missouri Laymen did not consider such treatment just. They shook their heads when seeing Old Methodism, which so early crossed the Mississippi river to the Missouri shore, must be driven out by later immigrants. But they had learned to attribute it to slavery, the corner stone of some of the most oppressive associations. In some counties the issue was discussed in subsequent canvasses as to whether the M. E. Church ought to have educational privileges in Missouri.

At the time the pro-slavery politicians were passing resolutions prohibiting our Ministers visiting and preaching among us, our laymen in my part of the State were resolving: "We regard it our duty to our duty to ourselves, our families and our country to take firm and positive ground against all such attempts to destroy our liberty."

A few of our laymen were killed, but generally from ambush, so that the criminals were not known. Swiftly there was a growth of this insolent tyranny, but it was not long until slavery stuck our Government Eagle, which was compelled to run out its claws. When the war came, every member of the Methodist Episcopal Church was found to be loyal. This was natural, as it was slavery intolerance that made war on the government in 1861—just the same that had made war on our church for fifteen years before. No other denomination in South Missouri was solidly loyal at the beginning of the war for disunion. Members of the *M.* E. Church were all law-abiding and patriotic lovers of the Union. They would take the oath to support the Government, which every citizen ought to be willing to do, to claim protection under its flag.

After being in a war for fifteen years, for our own freedom and equal justice in South Missouri, laymen were much relieved when they saw the gleam of the muskets of our glorious republic coming to their relief.

Although there were occasional raids of robbery and burning in our part of the state, I heard gray-haired Methodists say that they felt more contented than they had for fifteen years before. Men of faith believed that the intolerance begun by the votaries of slavery could not succeed finally in a country like ours. Hence, they nobly stood their ground geographically, politically and religiously.

We cannot do otherwise than mourn over the horrors of war, and weep with those who weep over lost friends, on both sides. Our church now receives, by law, equal

protection with the other churches. This is all that the Methodist citizen contended for. We never wanted any political power as an organization; hut as citizens we claimed the same rights given to citizens who were not members of the church. The present revolution is fast revealing the fact that Christians have equal rights in a Republic with those who are not Christians. The time was, in this State, when, if a man reformed, obtained pardon for past sins, quit lying, swearing and drinking whisky, and went so far as to go out and persuade others to reform, the law said he was disqualified as a member of the Legislature. I had the honor of being a member of the Constitutional convention of 1865, that plucked out this provision.

The war of 1861 is over, and we have progressed rapidly in the direction of justice, freedom, toleration, and happiness; still the revolutions of the nineteenth century are not ended. Slavery is dead, but the foe to freedom still lives and rules localities when it can.

This must be so for a while. In this connection I could mention a Methodist lady, recently deceased. During the darkest days to our preachers, her house was always a home to them, whence many left more cheerful than before entering that pleasant abode and receiving encouragement from that brave little woman. She was also an officer of the W. C. T. U., and dared to attack the greatest evil in our country. She never had an acquaintance who was not her friend. She was given a small post office, that assisted her to provide for her family; but because she was not a voter and because of her opinions and sympathies, she was removed, although a majority of both parties, of the locality, protested against the action, she having given universal satisfaction. She was thus sent to the kitchen to work, where she caught on tire and was burned to death, December 27, 1886. Thus passed away Emily *M.* Evans, *nee* Treece, niece of Rev. James T. Bail, of the Cincinnati Conference.

Thus the past runs into the present. This is an answer to the time-server's request not to revive memories of the past. The patriotic dead Methodists will lose nothing by being remembered. No shame will rest upon their living brothers by a rehearsal of their acts. They endured the cross, and as to the shame, they despised it. They believed right, did about right, and died. They made their offering for truth, for Heaven, for freedom, and for country. Their deep thoughts and lonely progress were

not known by the world. Even many of their enemies now acknowledge their principles correct. So far as concerns slavery, their principles are incorporated in the organic law of the greatest nation on earth. Hence, the position taken and kept by the Methodist Episcopal Church was and is correct. The fact is this was stubbornly denied only from 1845 to the close of the civil war, which is a short time in the life of the Church. We see that strife does not change principles. Those entertained and suffered for by our departed brethren are the same. It is just as wrong to buy and sell liquor now as it ever was. An attempt to compromise with such evils is an unprincipled action. Right and wrong cannot be blended, or compromised, like financial or property claims. Right ought to be upheld and wrong antagonized. Life is too short and too precious to be silent in the stagnant pool of conservatism, and we have no right to attempt to compromise the correct principles of the founders of our Church organization. They have withstood the test of ages. They have been good enough to die for. They have been sealed by time, by war and by the blood of the righteous. The noble dead have left them high up on the majestic temple of fame. Why should we not want to hear of these dead patriots, who gloried in the cross and the flag, and aided gospel light and National liberty in the darkest days of our State's history?

"For lo! that life is deemed most blest
That serves its God and country best."

Those who fell by the mob, fell unfettered and free, and wear martyrs' crowns. They leave us a church and a nation without slavery, and it is not now defined "a providential relation." Providence is against that relation. To God be the glory, that the spirit of the pro-slavery dragon is weakening, and that the liquor dragon is alarmed and will go next.

The slavery "horse and the rider hath He thrown into the sea." Now, "the waters are returning and covering the chariots and horsemen and all the host" of the Rum Pharaoh. This is "burying the past" approvingly. Bury its evils as well as those of the present. God will always help if called upon. Our departed brothers were right to stand firmly against slavery, and against "buying and selling liquor," as well as against drinking it. Their cry was from the Bible: "I will trust and not be afraid: for the Lord

Jehovah is my strength and my song. He, also, is become my salvation." Their voice of prayer and song is fled. They sleep in silence, awaiting the resurrection morn. Many have no marble slabs to mark their tombs.

"They sleep in secret. but their sod
Unknown to man, is marked of God."

It is our duty to remember them, and we do remember them when we see others die; when we see tears falling on graves made today. We remember them when we see a vacancy in society they properly filled. We remember them when our grief journeys back to their day. We think of them when we hear the winds sobbing around the corners and key-holes of our house. We remember them when we hear a shout of glory as they used to shout. We are reminded of those pure souls' flight to their heavenly home, when we upward look into the fathomless blue by day, and at the twinkling stars at night, that seem to be lamps of heaven set out for their use. They have gone never to return. They did not linger by the way nor turn back. They did not shrink from the battles of this world. The procession is still moving. Soon our time will be out, and we will be asked, "What have you done for right and righteousness during your time of probation?" So let us not dodge, nor bolt, nor sulk nor skulk, nor whittle, nor smoke, for we have no time for idleness. A man has no more right to decline aggression, and float with the current, than he has to cause his blood to cease its rounds. Life is the time for action, unceasing action.

EDWIN ROBINSON'S LAST LETTER

The following article first appeared in the Spring 2007 issue of *Toward the Setting Sun.* It features the text of a letter sent by Edwin Robinson to David Ross in August of 1864, just days before he was murdered. In addition to the transcription of the letter, a scan of the original is included. The Robinson letter is one of several letters written to David Ross between 1855 and 1874. These letters were contained in a small leather pouch that was donated to the Missouri United Methodist Archives. Images of the letters, together with transcriptions, are available online as part of the *American Civil War in Missouri* Digital Collection of the State Historical Society of Missouri (http://digital.shsmo.org/cdm/landingpage/collection/amcw).

On April 5, 2011, the Archives and History Commission of the Missouri Conference, UMC, dedicated a new grave marker for Rev. Robinson in the Fayette city cemetery. This was part of an effort of the Commission to recognize the clergy in Missouri who were members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South who were martyred during the Civil War.

Fayette Mo

August 29th 1864

Rev D Kopp.

Dear Bro. Your last has been unanswered until now, in consequence of absence. I lack but one appointment of having completed my four years work on this District. and although it has been four years of great trouble in the land, yet I have gone forward with my work. And under God, the Church in this Dis is still in a perfect state organization, Our labour has not been in vain, recently we have had some fine revivals. but what awaits us we cannot tell.

We are in the midst of excitement, the Country is full of Bushwhackers. this may be said of a large portion of North Mo- We have the Federals, also Quite numerous, Skirmishing, and raiding is very common. some light engagements, but no general ing-

agement as yet. It is said there was a hard fight in about Ten Miles of my house yesterday. Report says the F. were badly whipped. Horses are being taken by the whole sale, on both sides. Houses searched, and Goods taken &c &c. The worship of God frequently interrupted on the Sabbath days. I however have had the good luck never to have a Meeting interrupted, Neither have I as yet had anything taken from me, but I am now expecting to have the last horse taken from me: If the Draft should be commenced here, God only knows what will follow, the men all say that if they have to fight, they will chose sides for themselves. and it is true they are nearly all on one side. but they intend to remain Quiet if possible.

Missouri Annual Conf. is to meet on the 14th day in September at Richmond

May 6: such are the troubles of the country that it is now thought very doubtful about our being able to hold it. If we start horseback, we may be set a foot in a few miles. besides a man is much more safe where he is well known. The people generally keep close about home.

We have had a remarkably dry summer. Corn crops in places, are good in this County they are very good. There are sections of Country where they will hardly make any thing. Health in general is good, some portions of the Country has been visited with Flux, with considerable mortality. Myself and family are in the enjoyment of moderately good health.

I have long waited for an opportunity to visit you, but the time has not yet come. indeed the obstacles, now are greater than ever before

I suppose the property of your County has been assessed. I trust you will not neglect to pay the Tax on my land, at the time you pay for your own. I have reasons for wanting this strictly attended to. If it is paid notify me of the amount, and I will forward to you.

If I thought it admissable I would like to say some things with reference to the future destinies of our Country but as the next two months will open up to us some things of the future, I will only add, I trust there is light ahead.

My love to Louisa, and the family. Tell Mother that we are well, and that she may expect to hear from me soon, Remember us kindly to all my friends.

Yours affectionately

Erwin Robinson

Fayette Mo

August 29th 1864

Rev D Ross.

Dear Bro. Your last has been unanswered until now, in consequence of absence. I lack but one appointment of having completed my four years work on this District, and although it has been four years of great trouble in the land, yet I have gone forward with my work. And under God, The Church in this Dis is still in a perfect State organization. Our labour has not been in vain, recently we have had some fine revivals, but what awaits us we cannot tell.

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My love to Louiza, and the family. Tell Mother that we are well, and that She may expect to hear from me Soon, Remember us kindly to all my friends.

Yours affectionately

Edwin Robinson

Edwin Robinson, a clergy member of the Missouri Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, was killed by some Union soldiers near Fayette in the fall of 1864. His memoir that was printed in the conference journal for 1865 briefly describes the incident:

> EDWIN ROBINSON, for many years a Presiding Elder and "captain of the hosts" of our Israel in Missouri, fell by the hand of military ruffianism soon after our beloved Brother Caples. He was shot from his horse while quietly riding along the highway, simply because he was a Southern Methodist preacher. A good man and true, we mourn his tragic end, and pray for his cruel murderer.[1]

Three of the principal southern Methodist historians of the period, W.S. Woodard, W.M. Leftwich, and W.H. Lewis, describe this incident. The most detailed account is provided by Rev. Leftwich in his book, *Martyrdom in Missouri*:

REV. EDWIN ROBINSON

Of the early life of the Rev. Edwin Robinson little has been learned. He was received on trial into the Missouri Annual Conference, M. E. Church, in 1837, with Thomas D. Clanton, Daniel T. Sherman, F. W. Mitchell and James G. F. Dunlany. Mr. Robinson's first appointment was junior preacher on the Greenville Circuit, in the Boonville District, with Moses B. Evans his senior, and Jesse Green, Presiding Elder.

He received regular appointments from the Conference every year, and filled them acceptably and usefully to the Church. In 1852 he was made Presiding Elder of the Richmond District, and for several years filled that high and responsible office to the satisfaction of the Church. He was once honored with a seat in the General Conference, and was always held in high esteem by the ministry and the Church.

Wise and prudent in counsel, and thoroughly Methodistic in all his feelings, sentiments and practice, he ever conserved the best interests of the Church of his choice. He was never very brilliant in the pulpit, but sound, practical, earnest and useful. So widely known, he is now as widely lamented.

When the war broke out he felt and saw the necessity of great caution and prudence in all his public services and private ways. He refrained scrupulously from canvassing the exciting events that were so rapidly transpiring. And his very humble, quiet, unobtrusive spirit and manner of life passed him through the troubles of the war about as evenly and safely as any other prominent Southern Methodist minister in the State, out of St. Louis, up to the fatal hour of his cold, cruel Murder.

In the fall of 1864 Mr. Robinson was residing about two miles south of Fayette, in Howard county, and traveling the Fayette Circuit.

He had formerly lived in Chillicothe, and when the troubles of that fall thickened and darkened around him so alarmingly, he made up his mind to

remove his family either back to Chillicothe or into Grundy county, where his wife had some relatives living.

For this purpose he determined to precede his family and provide a home. Before setting out on the journey his wife prevailed on him, in view of the danger of traveling through the country, to go by way of Renick and take the North Missouri R.R. He afterward, however, abandoned that route and set out in company with a colored man who lived in Chillicothe and had a wife at his house, and in whom he had the most implicit confidence. Instead of going through Glasgow they took a nearer and safer route, through Monticello and Old Chariton. When they reached the latter place, only two miles distant from Glasgow, they halted for a few moments in front of Moore's Hotel talking with some gentlemen, when a squad of soldiers, commanded by Capt. Merrideth, rode rapidly up and the following colloquy was had:

Captain,--"Who and what are you?"

"My name is Robinson and I am a Methodist preacher."

Captain,--"A Southern Methodist preacher."

"Yes, sir."

"That, sir, is enough to damn you," said the valiant captain, excitedly, and turning to his men said, "Blow his damned brains out," which was instantly done.

These facts were reported by the negro, to which some ladies, who at the time were looking out at the window, make the following additions: They say that after the above conversation, and before any order was given to shoot, Mr. Robinson and the negro were permitted to ride on. After they had gone about fifty yards Capt. Merrideth called the negro back and asked him what he knew about Robinson. He replied that he knew nothing about

Robinson. He replied that he knew nothing of Robinson's politics, but that he had a very bad son who was a bushwhacker, upon which Merrideth dashed up to Robinson and either shot him himself or ordered his men to do it. As to who did the shooting the ladies are not fully agreed. Nor is it important. Captain Merrideth was in command, and the public verdict of the people, as well as the verdict of history, will hold him responsible.

He rode away from his victim after leaving an order that his body should not be removed on pain of death. For some reason the Captain did not take the dead man's horse, and the noble animal stood in silence and alone beside the body of his master whom he had so long borne—now pulseless, lifeless. Whether his person was robbed, has not transpired.

The ladies, true to the instincts of a finer and purer nature, and the warmer sympathies and loftier courage of humanity, notwithstanding the general terror and panic of the citizens, went out and pulled rails from the fence and made a rude pen around the dead man to prevent the hogs from profaning his body, and then sent a message to Mrs. Thomson, of Glasgow, informing her of the facts. This good lady caused a two-horse wagon to be prepared, and with several other "elect ladies," attended by two gentlemen, went out the following morning, which was the Sabbath, and brought his body into the city. His wife was summoned to look upon and follow to the grave the mangled remains of her beloved companion. Such was the reign of terror that the citizens of Glasgow were afraid to receive the body of the departed minister of God into their houses. He body was placed in the Christian Church, and the next day, Monday, followed to the town of Fayette by the disconsolate widow and a few silent mourners and deposited in the cemetery.[2]

W. H. Lewis, in his *History of Methodism in Missouri*, quoted the above passage from Leftwich and then adds the following paragraph:

This present writer, who at that time had charge of the Howard College, attended his sad burial. He saw Mr. Robinson when he left Fayette with the negro Saturday morning, on his way to Chillicothe, and remarked at the time that he was making a very perilous trip. He who looked so dignified and manly that morning on his fine horse as he left Fayette in a few hours was dead, shot through the head because he was a Southern Methodist preacher.[3]

W. S. Woodard, in the *Annals of Methodism in Missouri*, provided a similar account and obviously used Leftwich as a source without acknowledgement. He also misspells Robinson's name as "Roberson."[4]

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[1] *Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 1858-1865* (Nashville: Southern Methodist Publishing House, 1866), 542.
[2] W. M. Leftwich, *Martyrdom in Missouri*, vol. 2, (St. Louis: Southwestern Book and Publishing Company, 1870), 133-36.
[3] W. H. Lewis, *The History of Methodism in Missouri for a Decade of Years from 1860 to 1870* (Nashville: Publishing House of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 1890), 189.
[4] W. S. Woodard, *Annals of Methodism in Missouri* (Columbia: E. W. Stephens, 1893), 149-51.